

Appl. No. 10/718,014
Amdt. dated August 09, 2005
Reply to Office action of May 19, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of claims 8-11, 14-16, and 19 as amended, is respectfully requested. In addition, favorable consideration of newly presented claims 21-24 is also requested.

The Examiner's rejection of claims 1-6, 8-13 and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson et al is respectfully traversed. Claims 1-7, 12, 13 and 20 are being canceled by this amendment. Therefore the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) no longer applies to these claims.

Claim 19, as amended, requires an authorized user (58) to have an employee identification badge (62 or 68) with a radio frequency identification device (60) and a wrist band (72) with a radio frequency identification device (60) to remove tools (28) from the tool box (20) in the tool storage room (56). A first RFID readers (40) on the tool box (20) and a second RFID reader (50) at the exit of the tool storage room (56) receive and read the RF signals provided by the radio frequency identification devices (60). The RF signals include a tool identification code which identifies the tool being removed from the tool box and an employee identification code which identifies the employee as a

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user authorized to remove the tools from the tool box.

The invention of claim 19, as amended, requires the use of two separate and distinct identification devices which employees utilize when removing tools from the tool storage cabinet (20) and tool storage room (56). By utilizing two separate identification devices with the same employee identification code to verify that the individual removing the tool is an authorized user, it is almost impossible for a unauthorized user to remove tools from the tool storage room.

The electronic checkout system prevents an unauthorized user who acquired an authorized user's employee identification badge by theft or some other means from using the badge to remove tools from the tool storage room since there is a requirement for two identification devices with the same digital employee identification code. Since tools can be very expensive and are often stolen from Government or private sector tool storage facilities, the enhanced security provided by the electronic checkout system, as now claimed in amended claim 19, is extremely valuable in terms of cost savings. In the Department of Defense, for example, tool loss and theft of tools is several million dollars each year.

In addition, the Government has developed tools that have

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ordinance or other military applications and thus, it is extremely important that these tools remain in the possession, custody and control of authorized government users to prevent a catastrophe from occurring.

The invention recited in amended claim 19 also provides for a dual check of the tool identification code to insure that the tool being removed is correctly identified. If the tool identification code read by readers 40 and 50 differs than the electronic checkout system notes this fact and a user can review the discrepancy to determine which tool was removed from the tool storage facility (56).

Claim 19, as amended, also claims a remote tool box (128) with a wireless link (126) and an antenna (130) for providing information via RF signals to a database (134) which includes a list of employees authorized to remove portable tools from the remote tool box (128). On a military base which is extremely large, i.e. several hundred square miles, it may not be practical to keep all of the tools in one location since travel time between the tool storage facility and the remote location where the tool is needed can be several hours.

Wilson et al, at paragraph 40 discloses only one form of employee identification badge, i.e. a security badge carried by

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facility personnel, to recognize the presence of an authorized individual. Applicant's invention requires that the user have two forms of identification, i.e. the security badge (62 or 68) and wrist band (72), to remove tools from the tool storage facility (56), and that each form of identification have the same digital employee identification code. Otherwise tools cannot be removed from the tool storage facility (56) by the employee (58). As discussed, above this novel feature of Applicants invention, as recited in amended claim 19, is extremely important in terms of preventing theft which results in cost savings, and also to insure that only individuals authorized to use the tools can access the tools and remove the tools from the tool storage facility.

Wilson et al. does not disclose, teach or even suggest the requirement for two forms of identification with a digital employee identification code to remove tools from the tool storage facility. Creel et al does not teach or even suggest the use of an employee identification device such as security badge. Creel in paragraph 69 discusses only the use of a scan unit 10 to read RFID tags in tools and a key pad 16 and card reader 17 for user input. Sriharto et al also does not disclose or even suggest the use of an employee identification device such as

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security badge.

Wilson et al also fails to disclose, teach or even suggest the use of a wireless link and antenna to provide for information transfer relating to removal and use of tools from remote tool box (128) via RF signals to database (134) which includes a list of employees authorized to remove portable tools from the remote tool box (128). The prior art Creel and Sriharto patents also fail to disclose or even suggest the use of a wireless link to monitor tool removal from a remote tool box (128). As previously discussed, this is a critical feature of Applicant's claimed invention since military facilities are almost always extremely large in area and travel time to a central storage facility is often not practical.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 19, as amended, is patentably distinguishable over the prior of record since, the prior art fails to disclose, teach or even suggest (1) the claimed security badge (62 or 68) and wrist band (72) with digital employee identification code required by an individual before the individual can remove tools (28) from the tool storage facility (56); and (2) the claimed wireless link (126) and antenna (130) which allows information relating to tool removal from remote tool box (128) to be transmitted to the company

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network (120) which includes database (134). These critical and material claim limitations, not found in the prior art, make the Applicant's invention highly useful and effective in a large facility, such as a military base, where security is extremely important and distances between tool boxes can be five miles to several hundred miles.

Newly presented claims 21-23 which are directed to the RFID readers (40 and 50) and the type of tools removed from tool box (20) are also believed to be allowable for the reason set forth with respect to amended claim 19 since these claims depend from claim 19, which is believed to be allowable.

Claim 8, as amended, includes the requirement for two forms of identification, i.e. security badge (62 and 68) and wrist band (72), with employee identification code and the use of a wireless link (128) with antenna (126) to transfer tool authorization and removal information to the database (134). In addition, claim 8 recites the second RFID reader (50) as having an alarm which is activated whenever an unauthorized individual removes one tool of the plurality of tools from said tool storage room 56, previously recited in canceled claim 12. For the reason set forth with respect to claim 19, i.e. dual employee identification code required by an authorized user and wireless link for receiving

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authorization and removal information from a remote tool box (128), it is respectfully submitted that amended claim 8 and the claims dependent therefrom are allowable over the cited prior art.

Newly presented claim 24 recites an electronic checkout system which is adapted for use in a tool storage facility (56) having multiple tool boxes (112, 114 and 116). This claim also recites a requirement for two forms of identification by an authorized user, i.e. security badge (62 and 68) and wrist band (72), with employee identification code and the use of a wireless link (128) with antenna (126) to transfer tool authorization and removal information to the database (134). The prior art Wilson patent does not disclose or even suggest an electronic checkout system which has the capability of identifying tools removed from multiple tool boxes and also verifying through two forms of identification that the individual removing the tools is authorized to remove and use the tools. The prior art Creel patent does not add to the disclosure of Wilson in that Creel teaches only an individual storage enclosure or tool box with the capability of querying individual objects stored in the tool box. Sriharto also does not suggest the use of multiple tool boxes. Again, this capability of electronic checkout system to monitor

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multiple tool boxes in a tool storage facility is a critical feature of the claimed invention which is not taught, disclosed or even suggested by the prior art of record.

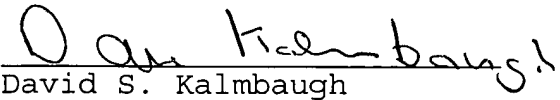
To summarize, the inventions of independent claims 8 and 19 and the claims dependent therefrom recite (1) a security badge (62 or 68) and wrist band (72) with digital employee identification code which is required by an individual before the individual can remove tools from the tool storage facility (56); and (2) a wireless link 126 and antenna 130 which allows information relating to tool removal from remote tool box (128) to be transmitted to the company network (120) which includes database (134), features not found in the cited prior art and not obvious from the teachings of this art. In addition, independent claim 24 recites an electronic checkout system which has includes the above features and also has the capability of monitoring tool removal from multiple tool boxes in a tool storage facility and verifying that only an authorized user can remove the tools, a critical feature not found in the cited prior art.

In view of the foregoing remarks considered in conjunction with the claims, as amended, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. The early allowance of claims 8, 19 and 24 and the claims dependent

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therefrom, and the prompt issuance of this case are earnestly
solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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Amendments to the Drawings:

There are no amendments to the drawings.

Attachment: None